

Razihi language

Razihi (Rāzīḥī) is a South Semitic language spoken by at least 62,900 people in the vicinity of Mount Razih (Jabal Razih) in the far northwestern corner of Yemen.^[3] Along with Faifi, it is the only surviving descendant of the Old South Arabian languages.^[2]

Speakers

Razihi is spoken on Jabal Razih, a mountain lying west of the town Sa'dah, whose highest summit, Jabal Hurum, is 2,790 m (9,150 ft) high. The population of Jabal Razih was approximately 25,000 in the 1970s and is estimated to be much more now.^[4] The number of Razihi speakers is reported by *Ethnologue* to have been 62,900 in 2004.^[5]

Phonology

Razihi exhibits wide-scale assimilation of coronal consonants in words. Unlike in Arabic, this is not restricted to obstruents but includes sonorants, most significantly /n/,^[6] as can be seen in words such as *ssān* "man" and *ssānah*, "woman", which are cognate words of Arabic *insān* "person". Nasal consonant assimilation was a feature of both Ancient North Arabian and Old South Arabian but is not found in any Arabic dialect. Razihi also has a large number of non-Arabic basic vocabulary items, prepositions and other grammatical forms.^[3]

In contrast to Yemeni Arabic dialects, Razihi does not ever allow word-final consonant clusters (-CC).^[6]

Syncope, or the removal, of the high vowels /i/ and /u/ is a common phenomenon in Razihi:

- *wāḥdah* – 'one f.' (/wāḥid + ah/)
- *wiṣlū* – 'they m. arrived' (/wiṣil + ū/)
- *gibżūhim* – 'they m. seized them m.' (/gibiz + ū + him/)^[6]

In Classical Arabic:

- š corresponds to Razihi /tʃ/ and its emphatic correlate.
- ḥ corresponds to general Yemeni /ð/ in recent words but /tʃ/ in older words.^[3]

References

Razihi	
Jabal Razih	Rāzīḥī
Native to	Yemen
Native speakers	62,900 (2004) ^[1]
Language family	Afro-Asiatic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Semitic ▪ South ▪ Western ▪ Old South Arabian ▪ Razihi
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	rzh
Glottolog	jaba1234 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/jaba1234) ^[2]

1. [Razihi](https://www.ethnologue.com/19/language/rzh/) (<https://www.ethnologue.com/19/language/rzh/>) at Ethnologue (19th ed., 2016)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Jabal Razih" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/jaba1234>). Glottolog 3.0. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute

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3. Watson, Glover-Stalls, Al-razihi, & Weir (2006), "The language of Jabal Rāzīḥ: Arabic or something else?", *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 36:35–41
 4. Edzard, Lutz; Retsö, Jan (2006). *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon II: Oslo-Göteborg Cooperation 4th-5th November 2005* (<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=xSf4yO1d7-cC&pg=PA40>). Otto Harrassowitz Verlag. p. 40. ISBN 9783447054416.
 5. "Rāzīḥī" (<https://www.ethnologue.com/language/rzh>). Ethnologue. Retrieved 2017-11-12.
 6. Edzard, Lutz; Retsö, Jan (2006). *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon II: Oslo-Göteborg Cooperation 4th-5th November 2005* (<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=xSf4yO1d7-cC&pg=PA44>). Otto Harrassowitz Verlag. p. 44. ISBN 9783447054416.
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